

YUCCA MOUNTAIN DRAFT EIS

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

- 1 A number of concerned citizens attended the recent public hearing in Chicago on the Yucca Mountain Draft EIS. As one of these citizens, I heard the presentations, and later spoke myself against this proposal. I was recorded as part of the permanent record. (Regrettably, the earlier part of the meeting, during which the Department of Energy panel members spoke, and important questions were asked of them, was not recorded - a most serious omission.)
- 2 Let me state here once again that I am unalterably opposed to the transportation of "spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste" across *my* state (Illinois) - or any *other* state - and I am also opposed to the depositing of this material at the Yucca Mountain site. My conclusions are based on informed and rational thought.
- 3 At the hearing, accounts were given by members of the audience of disastrous nuclear mishaps of the past, and ones that are still going on - incidents known to the general public, but also other serious incidents, accidents, miscalculations, bunglings, ad infinitum, that are still little known, or which have been consciously minimized or even suppressed, both in our country and abroad.

How could *anyone* hearing the myriad concerned questions posed by the audience, and the unconvincing and unsatisfactory explanations offered by the administrative panel, fail to realize that this proposal is totally dubious and untrustworthy? How can we citizens possibly give our *approbation* to such flagrant gambling with our lives, and those of our children and grandchildren, gambling with the public health, and gambling with what still remains of our precious environment?

Three fundamental concerns incorporate *all* of the doubts raised:

- 4 1. THE COUNTLESS UNKNOWNNS! At this point in time, *no* predictions can possibly be reliable or valid as to the future effectiveness and safety of this proposed project, no matter which "experts" attempt to assuage our fears! There are still far too many *unknowns*! There are still far too many concerned experts who disagree. Even Einstein was not able to predict the results of his own discovery!
- 5 2. THE NUMBER OF VARIABLES! These are almost too exponential to comprehend. Even supposing it were possible to draw up a list of all of them, how can an informed opinion be made as to how these vast numbers of variables might behave by themselves, much less in combination with other unknown and unpredictable factors and situations? The slightest slip-up, whether it be human, mechanical, political, geological or meteorological could be catastrophic not only to the United States, but to the entire globe!
- 6... 3. THE NUMBER OF YEARS! Thirty long years are currently proposed for the completion of the project. Who, if any, of the people who draft it now will even be *around* in the future to monitor it? Or if they *are* around, will they continue as retirees to have the concern and

continued

...6 zeal required to maintain alleged safeguards, or instruct others as to potential dangers? How might future political changes or modifications affect the plan, and who can predict what these changes might be? How would down-sizing of personnel, or cut-backs in funding affect efficiency - and ultimately *safety*? What will be the condition of the Yucca Mountain dumping site during this period and beyond? And what will be the overall state of the world during the next 30 years? How might future local conflicts or international wars affect the project? How about the very real possibilities of terrorism, of sabotage? These legitimate anxieties have not been seriously addressed.

7 But even more worrisome are the *only* two alternatives proposed in the EIP report!

a. "Long-term storage at the current storage sites with effective institutional controls for at least 10,000 years."

b. "Long-term storage at the current storage sites with no effective institutional controls after approximately 100 years."

As one outspoken and outraged college student said, "How can we have the *arrogance* to make decisions that will affect future generations for one hundred years! How can we have the *arrogance* to mandate 'effective institutional controls for at least 10,000 years!'"

#### CONCLUSIONS:

8 1. It is essential that much more time be given to solving the very real problems of finding  
9 sensible, appropriate, and safe ways of disposing of nuclear materials. (The present EIS  
report is impressive only in its voluminousness, but not by the clarity or wisdom of its  
contents!)

10 It has become essential to consider not only the *present* nuclear waste problem, but also to  
worry about the poisonous accumulations that are *currently* being generated! It should be  
remembered at all times that this situation is *on-going*!

11 2. We, the concerned public, must be far better informed by our Government, and have a much  
larger share in decision-making that affects *our* welfare than we have had to date. A number  
of people at the hearing commented on the absurdly short time allotted for us even to *read* the  
voluminous EIP report! Some mentioned that they had only received the huge box of material  
that very morning! In general people got the impression that the recent event was not properly  
or adequately publicized. Whether true or not, this issue is far, far too important for anyone  
to feel that things are being "railroaded through!" (The pun is intentional!)

3. There must be far better public airing of the issues, as well as public discussion and debate.  
This has been noticeably lacking. And events such as the recent hearing should be conducted  
by brilliant scientists in *all* fields of science, and include top level environmentalists, medical  
personnel, and intelligent and well-meaning citizens, all well-informed and highly qualified to  
research, understand, and be entrusted with considering all ramifications involved in the  
resolution of such a gigantic quandary.

We need far fewer engineers, construction companies representatives, and individuals who  
have major tie-ins with nuclear-related industries! How can such people not be biased, and  
not dedicated to maintaining their own "vested interests?" One wonders whether *their* home  
towns are *also* destined to be afflicted by thirty years of toxic cargoes! One wonders about  
the validity of *their* judgment...

12 4. Any studies or recommendations made in the future must be written clearly, in succinct  
language, and be widely disseminated in English and in other languages spoken by our vast  
populace - with particular attention given to the languages of the people through whose towns

- ...12 trains loaded with nuclear waste are destined to travel! We, the Citizenry, deserve *primary* consideration in this grave and unprecedented predicament that threatens so gravely our future welfare.
- 13 5. Finally, *other* energy sources must be actively explored and sought by our Government! It is imperative that the United States take the lead in investigating and promoting energy sources other than nuclear ones. There are optimistic hopes in this direction, despite continuing efforts of major corporations to deter such investigations and maintain their powerful economic positions.

Possibilities lying in this direction are both real and plausible, and the time has come for our Government to take up the matter seriously!

Yours sincerely

  
Carol Lems-Dworkin